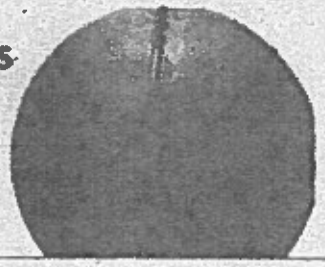
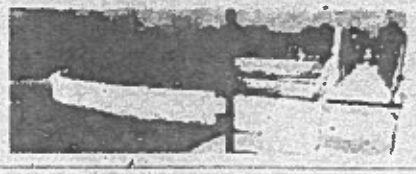
League Honors

District 12-5A, Region XIV Red River Conference announces awards 1D



Delving Deeper Into Contaminated Water

How do local water treatment methods stack up? Is East Texas water contaminated? Get answers to these questions and more on **Page 1B**



Part 3 of an AP series looks into what water suppliers and the government are doing to reduce risks to the public 5B

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Digging For The Truth

Police Search Backyard Of Man Missing Since 1996

By KENNETH DEAN
Staff Writer

The yellow evidence flags mark areas of interest for police in the backyard of a Tyler home — the former home of a man who has been missing for 12 years and who may have met with foul play.

Authorities would not confirm nor deny questions posed by the Tyler Paper on Tuesday regarding the possibility that repressed memories of a child were the catalyst for the renewed interests in the case.

Whatever the reason, police and FBI agents have once again searched the residence at 2314 Pleasant Drive where Damon Paul Billiot was last seen on March 15, 1996.

BILLIOT

Tyler Police Department Public Information Officer Don Martin said major crimes detectives had recently been contacted by Billiot's mother in regard to her son's disappearance, which she reported two months after he was last seen. Billiot's wife did not report her husband missing.

"We've followed up with the wife who lives in Tennessee, and the case is still under investigation and we are still following leads," Martin said.

Residents in the neighborhood say federal agents and police were seen at the home with several types of equipment last week.

"I know they are looking for that guy who went missing years ago and the other day I could tell they were looking for something in that backyard," Miles Waddell said.

Waddell said that over the course of the past few years, authorities have used equipment, dogs and manpower to search for the missing man.

"They've been over there on several different occasions," he said.

As police continue their investigation, there are unanswered questions by Billiot's family.

A state away, Shirley Billiot has waited

See MISSING, Page 6A

— Staff Photo By Jaime R. Carrero

CRIME SCENE?: Tyler Police Department flags mark spots behind a residence at 2314 Pleasant Drive in Tyler where allegedly human remains dating from 1996 may be found.

Coaches' Resignations Up For Discussion At LaPoyner Meeting

By KELLY PREW
Staff Writer

LARUE — The LaPoynor School District Board of Trustees will decide the fate of two teachers/coaches on Friday suspended more than a week ago for undisclosed personnel matters.

Ronnie Dunn and Brad Rogers submitted resignations before Monday's board meeting, but after more than three hours in executive session, the board took no action.

Ninety people attended the meeting Monday seeking information on the cause for suspension. Seven spoke to the board on behalf of the educators.

Superintendent Eugene Buford told the Tyler Paper he could not comment on the issue until the matter was "hopefully resolved" after a special board meeting at 7 p.m. Friday. The meeting will be an executive session, and there will be no public comment opportunities.

"It's a personnel matter, and we're gathering more legal advice," Buford said. "It was

MISSING

Continued From 1A

for 12 years to learn what happened to her son, and she hopes that one day her frustrations will be over and the case will be solved.

"It's been exactly 12 years this spring and I know he didn't just walk away," she told the newspaper. "He wasn't like that, but I could never get anyone to listen to me."

Mrs. Billiot said she was surprised that police had been back to the home.

"Right now I am surprised because I haven't talked to them in a few weeks," she said.

When asked about her knowledge of the case thus far, she said she was "not at liberty" to discuss the facts; however, she said her son, a former Lake Charles Crime Lab supervisor, moved with his family to Tyler just six months before his disappearance.

She said police for years told her that adults have the choice to come and go as they please, but she said her son had an extensive collection of guitars and had too much going for him to just wander off from his family.

Police think now she may be right, because on the National Center for Missing Adults Web site Tyler Police detectives have stated the circumstances of his disappearance as unknown.

"Damon was last seen at his residence in the vicinity of the 2300 block of Pleasant in Tyler, Texas. Foul play is suspected," the site states.

Martin said what is on the site is correct, but he stopped short of saying the case was a possible homicide investigation, if there were any suspects or if resurfaced memories were behind the new search.

"Right now we, being the department, are not going to discuss any aspects of the case," he said Tuesday after discussing the newspaper's questions with detectives and supervisors.

"I can say that we are working the case and will follow any new leads," he said.

Mrs. Billiot and her husband, Bob, just want to know what happened.

"We hope that we will have closure and if something did happen to our son that we find out what it was and who did it," she said. "We want to know."

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Tyler Police Department at 903-531-1000 or the Tyler/Smith County Crimestoppers at 903-597-2833.